

I am a Sandy Hook mom.

I have a 6 yr old first grade daughter and 7 yr old second grade son in Sandy Hook Elementary.

I truly believe that if assault rifles were not legal Adam Lanza would not have been able to get one. We might have seen a different story that day. Some kids and teachers might have died, but not 20.

My daughter might not have lost her best friend Gracie. She might not have lost half of her daisy friends that day. My son might not have lost his swim buddy Daniel.

My childrens innocence and sense of safety has been stripped from them. I will have to worry about their mental health in the days moving forward. But it's not just my children that were affected.

There are 400 children in that school. 30-40 of those children were hiding in closets listening to the cries and pleading of their friends as they were massacred. Each body was riddled with 3-11 bullets. He shot 100 bullets in just seconds. Children walked out and saw their principal on the floor in a pool of blood. They found Vicky Soto, riddled with bullets, cradling a child in her arms. There are many children who still wake up screaming from the nightmares night after night.

I watched from the parking lot as a police officer carried out the lifeless little body of my daughter's daisy friend. She looked so much like my daughter I had to look hard to see that it wasn't. Her long brown hair flowed down and she had a bullet wound on her head and blood all over her midriff. I heard that the officer who found her looked into her eyes and told her "your parents love you"

I watched as the sole survivor of Mrs. Damato's class came out of the school covered in blood and flesh. I waited and waited in that parking lot, begging God that my kids be safe, until they finally came out of the building. Though there were many parents there that day unable to find their children. They live every parent's worst nightmare.

These things never had to occur. If we had left the old assault weapons ban in place, Adam Lanza would not have had that gun. He had gone to Dicks sporting goods the day before and had been turned away. There would have been survivors, they would have had a chance to run.

I have heard the argument for a security guard. I believe a security guard would have been outgunned and massacred right along with our children. Besides, would you put security guards in the grocery store, or in the church or on the soccer field? What would stop someone from shooting at a school bus? Someone with an assault rifle would not even need to be on the bus, he could destroy dozens of innocent lives in the blink of an eye from his front yard.

The answer is to cut the snake off at the head. Ban all assault rifles. I don't care about the cosmetic differences – all of them. Ban high capacity clips.

It only takes one bullet to take a life, if you are afraid of a home invasion then head for the target range.

Australia banned assault rifles in 1996. They had 18 mass murders before. After the ban 0. The UK had similar results. No one is asking to take away hand guns and hunting rifles from responsible gun

only 200 of 30,000<sup>gun</sup> deaths are justified self defense homicides

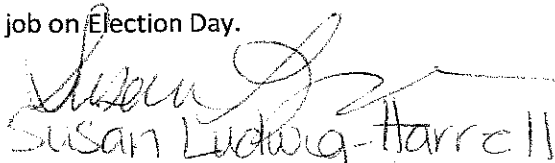
owners. But leave the assault rifles where they belong, in the military. Give our children a sporting chance.

Look at the national polls. The people are speaking. The majority of the the people support these bans, background checks and the addressing of mental health. None of these measures will work alone, they need to be done together to make a difference.

Lastly, I am tired of watching night after night the childish behavior of the republicans and democrats. This is not a game of chess where you can sit in a stalemate. You might as well be sticking your tongues out at each other. This is our lives and we the people are speaking. You represent us and we want change. National polls say 91% of the country support universal background checks and yet the republican vote for them is 0. Who are you representing, us or the gun companies? How you can say no to 91% is mind blowing.

I will tell you this. The gun companies are calling us the ct. affect and our feelings will fade. I can tell you that as a mother who has had her children's lives endangered, their innocence and sense of safety shattered, let alone what it has done to their mental health- my feelings and the feelings of this country will not fade. Every day that goes by turns my grief into a fierce determination for change. I know that all of these changes will not bring my children's friends and teachers back (and that breaks my heart) but who knows, the changes might save your child one day.

You elected officials had better get with the program or even the gun companies will not be able to buy your job on Election Day.

  
Susan Ludwig-Harrell  
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